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UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 001000

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NCE AND NEA/I
NSC PLEASE PASS DAMON WILSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI MILITARY POLICE OFFICERS GRADUATE FROM
SLOVAK TRAINING

1. Charge and DAO attended the December 19 graduation ceremony of 14 Iraqi military police officers from the Slovak Military Medical Training Center at Lest. In his remarks to the group, Slovak MinDef Liska praised and congratulated the Iraqi soldiers, stressing the need for the international community to continue supporting the Iraqi people on their road to a secure, democratic future. Liska said Slovakia would maintain its training of Iraqi soldiers and its commitment to the security and development of democracy in Iraq more generally. Liska also made the point that the more Iraqis the coalition can train, the greater the prospects for return for Slovak forces deployed there. MinDef officials told us they would be happy to host additional groups in the future, and would continue to train Iraqis in Iraq.

2. The Iraqis -- of all ranks and representing all geographical parts of Iraq -- were beaming. In conversations with the Charge and DAO, they went on at length about their determination to help secure their country. The group's leader, Capt. Hussein Hussein, stressed to Charge that while the security threats remained serious, they would ultimately be seen as a temporary period in Iraqi history on the way to a much brighter future. Most Iraqis had never known life except under dictatorship; they would increasingly turn against the insurgents. Capt. Hussein smiled as he said that he envisioned his country as an example to the rest of the Arab world that it can democratize.

3. All of the soldiers were extremely thankful for U.S. assistance and greatly appreciated our presence at their graduation. They feel they have learned a great deal that will help them in their security responsibilities and that they will pass along to the different units they will join when they return to Iraq (NOTE: They depart Slovakia for Iraq Dec. 21. END NOTE). They were also quick to make the case to us that they felt they were doing their jobs as "Iraqis," not Kurds or Arabs, Sunni or Shia (the only two female graduates in the group were both Kurds).

4. The Iraqis look forward to further cooperation with the Slovaks, and the Slovak trainers considered the Iraqis to be good, hardworking students. Iraqi Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia (resident in Vienna), Tariq Agrawi, voiced similar sentiments. He also used his remarks to his Slovak hosts to express the hope that Iraq would soon set up an Embassy in Bratislava, something he has recommended to his Ministry in Baghdad.
SILVERMAN

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